

17 April 2026

RE: Next Round Applicant Support Program

Jonathan Zuck
Chair
At-Large Advisory Committee

Dear Jonathan,

Thank you for your 20 March [letter](#) expressing the At-Large Advisory Committee's (ALAC) support of the ICANN Board's intention to allocate additional funding to provide assistance for up to 75 qualified Applicant Support Program (ASP) applicants. The Board shares the ALAC's view that the ASP is an integral component of the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round and acknowledges the ALAC's supports the allocation of additional funding from 2012 Round auction proceeds for this purpose.

As the ALAC may be aware the Board recently [approved](#) the use of an additional \$4.9 million from the 2012 Round auction proceeds to enable a 75-percent fee reduction and other financial and nonfinancial support for up to 75 qualified applicants, should the number of qualified applicants exceed the 45 originally budgeted for. This approval was based on Community input received during and after ICANN85.

The Board also acknowledges the ALAC's interest in applying the maximum discount and notes that the [Governmental Advisory Committee's ICANN85 Communiqué](#) also advocates for an 85-percent discount on evaluation fees for up to 75 qualified applicants.

As noted in my 6 April 2026 [blog](#), the Board is supportive of the suggestion to increase the discount to 85-percent for up to 75 qualified applicants. In the [Applicant Support Program Handbook](#) and [ASP Funding Plan](#), the amount of support was cited as a range of 75- to 85-percent, depending on the number of applicants that qualify for support (e.g., 85-percent for up to 40 qualified applicants, 75-percent for up to 45). Since an 85-percent discount for up to 75 applicants exceeds the level of funding for which the Board [previously sought input](#), the Board has requested community input on the additional funding needed to provide an 85-percent discount if all 75 applicants qualify. If feedback is positive, the Board will consider the increase to fund the additional amount from the 2012 Round auction proceeds through a separate resolution.

As it relates to future implications for the 2012 Round auction proceeds, the Board notes that both the original and proposed funding requests are expressed as "up to" amounts. Accordingly, funds will be used only as needed, based on the number of ASP applicants that qualify for support, submit new gTLD applications, undergo conditional evaluations (where applicable), and

ultimately become registry operators. The full allocation will not be disbursed upfront; rather, funds will be drawn upon as needed to cover the direct costs of support.

With respect to the replenishment of 2012 Round auction proceeds funds, this was not contemplated in the original funding request. For further information regarding ICANN's plan for managing any surplus or deficit as a result of the 2026 Round, please see [ICANN's Plan for Managing Any Surplus / Deficits as a Result of the New gTLD Program](#).

Regarding continued transparency on evaluations, implementation, and outcomes, the Board understands that, consistent with the [SubPro Final Report](#) and GNSO Guidance Process (GGP) guidance, ICANN staff is conducting monitoring and evaluation activities, including surveys to participants in ICANN engagement activities and a survey to all ASP applicants. [Updates on this work were presented during ICANN82](#). Additionally, reporting on the ASP has been and will continue to be published on the [ASP statistics webpage](#).

The Board thanks the ALAC for their continued engagement and support for the ASP, and looks forward to continued dialogue on its impact and outcomes.

Sincerely,



Tripti Sinha
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors